

# Browning and Italian Art and Artists

by Pearl Hogrefe

*June, 1913*

Submitted to the Department of English of the  
University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

BROWNING AND ITALIAN  
ART AND ARTISTS

PEARL HOGREFE

1913

B R O W N I N G   A N D   I T A L I A N   A R T   A N D  
A R T I S T S



A thesis submitted to the Department of English of the  
University of Kansas, in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

By

Pearl Hogrefe, A. B. (1910)

JUNE 1913

BROWNING AND ITALIAN ART AND  
ARTISTS



## P R E F A C E

The subject of this thesis was chosen under the assumption that while much has been written concerning a few individual art poems, such as Abt Vogler, Andrea del Sarto, and Fra Lippo Lippi, the entire influence of Italy in this field, has never been analyzed. The statement also excludes much of Browning's treatment of art; for he mentions Spanish, French, and English artists and their works. Then it has been found necessary to omit all non-Italianate comparisons of one art with another, and all such statements concerning the nature and purpose of art.

But in the limited subject chosen, the purpose has been to make a complete estimate of the amount of Italian influence in the fields of sculpture, music, poetry, architecture, and painting, in the order named. This order is based on the amount of each in the poems, proceeding from less to greater. Each of the five divisions contains a statement of the number of poems containing such references, the artists and the works of art mentioned, the place of the work or the artist in the history of its development, and where it is possible to determine it, the probable source of Browning's knowledge. Then follows a discussion of his use of the art - a. for purposes of comparison, b. for setting, c. for the main subject matter of the poem. The conclusion undertakes a limited general comparison of Browning's use of the different arts.

## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Browning Society Papers

Encyclopaedia Britannica - Articles by Sidney Colvin, W. M. Rossetti,  
and unsigned articles.

New International Encyclopaedia

Hand-book for Central Italy and Rome- Blewitt -

London, John Murray - 1850

Hand-book for Sardinia, Lombard, and Venice - London - Murray - 1856

Hand-book of Tuscany, Lucca, and Florence - Murray - 1856

Cities in Italy - Augustus Hare - Dalby, Isbister, and Co. - 1876

Rossini and his School - H. Sutherland Edwards - Scribner and  
Welford - 1881

Sordello's Story Retold in Prose- Annie Wall - Boston - 1886

Dante's Divine Comedy - trans. by Longfellow - Houghton, Mifflin  
and Co. - 1886

Dante's Vita Nuova - trans. by Rossetti

Hand-book of Browning - Mrs. Orr - London - 1887

Renaissance in Italy, The Fine Arts - Symons - 1887

Cyclopaedia of Painters and Painting - Champlin and Perkins -  
Scribner's - 1887

Verdi - F. J. Crowes - Milne - London - 1887

Introduction to Browning - Hiram Corson - D. C. Heath and Co. - 1889

Life and Letters of Robert Browning - Mrs. Sutherland Orr- Smith

Elder and Co. - 1891

Browning Guide- Book - G. W. Cooke - Houghton, Mifflin, and Co.- 1891

Hand-book of Rome - London - Murray - 1894

Lives of the Painters - Vasari - Ed. by Blashfield and Hopkins - 1897

The Letters of E. B. Browning - Ed. by F. G. Kenyon - Smith, Elder  
and Co. - 1897

The Poetical Works of Robert Browning - Ed. by Porter and Clarke-

T. Y. Crowell and Co. - 1898

The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning-  
Smith Elder and Co.- 1899

Life and Letters of Robert Browning - Revision of Mrs. Orr's Ed. -

F. G. Kenyon - Smith, Elder and Co. - 1908

Italian Renaissance Architecture - Anderson - Batsford, London - 1909

Life of Robert Browning - Griffin and Minchin - Methuen and Co. -  
London - 1910

Pilgrimage to Haunts of Browning - Pauline Leavens - The Bowrons -  
Chicago - 1912

# C O N T E N T S

## Introduction

### I. Browning's general interest in art

#### Introductory 1

#### 1. Knowledge of music 1

#### 2. Knowledge of painting 1

#### 3. Knowledge of sculpturing 2

### II. Basis of Procedure 3

## Discussion

### I. Sculpture

#### 1. Outline of references to sculpture 5

#### 2. Tabulation 6.

#### 3. Historical scope 7

#### 4. Art students in Pippa Passes 7

#### 5. Imaginary sculpture 8

#### 6. The nude in sculpture 9

#### 7. Use for dramatic possibilities 9

#### 8. Physical setting 9

#### 9. Technical terms 10

#### 10. Source of Browning's knowledge 10

### II. Music

#### 1. Outline of references to music 11

#### 2. Tabulation 13

#### 3. Use for Comparative purposes 14

#### 4. Use as principal subject matter 15

#### 5. Technical terms 16

6. Lack of Italian musical references	16
7. Conformity to the facts	17
8. Source of Browning's knowledge	17

### III. Poetry

1. Outline of references to poetry	17
2. Tabulation	19
3. Time in Browning's career	19
4. Sordello	20
5. Other types of poets	21
6. Dante	22
7. Manner of other references	23
8. Lack of historical accuracy c. Dante	23
9. Extent and source of Browning's literary knowledge	24
10. Imaginary poets versus real	24

### IV. Architecture

1. Outline of references to architecture	25
2. Tabulation	31
3. Reasons for amount at Florence and Rome	32
4. Source of Browning's knowledge	32
5. Procedure in The Ring and the Book	33
6. Manner of employing architecture	34
7. Comparison with other authors	35

### V. Painting

1. Outline of references to painters	36
--------------------------------------	----

2. Tabulation	46
3. Amount of Browning's knowledge	47
4. Distribution in his works	47
5. Irregularity of distribution	47
6. Events connected with Old Pictures in Florence	49
7. Source of other poems	50
8. Number dealing with painting as a primary subject	50
9. Uses for comparison	51
10. Fidelity to history	51
11. Themes of art poems	52

## Conclusion

### I. Browning's attitude toward art

1. Lippo's view as expressing his own	54
2. Use of second-rate artists	54
3. Comparative amount of personality in the arts	55
4. Browning as the poet of humanity	57



## I N T R O D U C T I O N

## I. BROWNING'S GENERAL INTEREST IN ART

It is natural that one should expect to find mention of many art works in Browning's poems. All his life he was interested in more than one form of it; and in spite of the improbability of his ever having had serious doubts on the subject, some biographers state that he was for a long time undecided whether to become a musician, a painter. or a poet.

1. KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC \*-- As a child, Browning received a musical education and became a pianist of some ability. This appreciation of music was further cultivated, during his young manhood, by attendance at the best concerts that London afforded. Beethoven is most often mentioned as an example of his preference. During the latter years of his married life in Italy, according to letters of Mrs. Browning, he took charge of the musical education of their small son, Wiedeman. In the years following 1873, while he was in London again, he ~~took charge of the~~ was a constant frequenter of musical concerts. Undoubtedly, then, his interest in music was no intermittent fancy, but was constant and above the average. If further proof be needed, it is found in the fact that his writings show a finer appreciation of music and a greater knowledge of its technique than those of any other poet.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF PAINTING -- A knowledge of painting, as well as a liking for it, was cultivated in Browning's earliest years, through the medium of the Dulwich gallery. It was within walking distance of his home, and there he was often taken by his father. Later he became a well-known

figure in one or two London studios. This interest in painting, as well as in sculpture, was retained through his entire life. Mrs. Browning's letters from Italy give many statements of art interests, accounts of visits to works of art, and statements of friendships with artists - the American sculptor, Mr. Powers, Leighton, Story, as well as Kirkup, the art connoisseur. In a letter of November the fifth, 1846, only two months after they left England together, Mrs. Browning speaks of her husband's knowledge of pictures and says that she means to learn about them under his direction.

In 1855, the group of poems entitled Men and Women was published; and for some time after this, Browning took a complete rest from poetical labors. During this pause ( as a letter dated May the second, 1856, from Mrs. Browning to Mrs. Jameson, informs us ) the poet became the artist. After thirteen days application, she informs us, he produced some really startling copies of heads. Then she adds - " And really, with all his feeling and knowledge of art, some of the mechanical trick of it can not be out of place."

3. KNOWLEDGE OF SCULPTURE -- In 1860, another of Mrs. Browning's letters tells of her husband's work in sculpturing at the studio of Mr. Story. She speaks of his turning to account his studies in anatomy, and of the fact that he had already copied two busts, of young Augustus and of Psyche. At this time he was working six hours a day on modeling. " His habit," Mrs. Browning tells us, "was to work by fits and starts", and he had taken up sculpturing until his mind should be ready again for poems.

## II. BASIS OF PROCEDURE

Many other statements showing an appreciation of the arts are found in the life and letters of the Brownings. Of these, some details will be mentioned later in connection with each art. Only such facts have been noted here as tend to establish the basis from which the discussion proceeds - namely, that Browning had a great and continuous interest in the fine arts, and that it is only reasonable to expect a considerable amount of knowledge and appreciation of them in his writings.

The entire number of Browning's poems is two hundred twenty-two. Forty-five of these, or slightly more than one-fifth, have some mention of one or more of the arts or artists of Italy. Many others also deal with some non-Italianate mention of the arts. With forty-five of the poems of Robert Browning, then (see appendix for list) - the number containing references to Italian art subjects, it is the purpose of this article to deal only so far as their Italianate subject matter is concerned.

## DISCUSSION

## I. SCULPTURE

### 1. OUTLINE OF REFERENCES TO SCULPTURE \*2-

#### A. Sordello

- a. Nicolo Pisano (1206-1278 ) - by his study of nature and the ancients, gave the death-blow to Byzantinism and heralded the Renaissance.
- b. Giovanni Pisano (c.1250-1330) - whose many pupils carried the continuation of his father's principles throughout Northern Italy.

#### B. Pippa Passes

- a. Canova (1757-1822) - a refined, classical, but somewhat artificial reviver of Italian sculpture in the modern era. Two of his works are named - (1) Psiche-fanciulla (Psyche as a young girl with a butterfly, in the Possagno gallery) and (2) the Pietà ( a statue of the Virgin Mary with the dead Christ in her arms).
- b. Jules - an imaginary modern young sculptor, studying Italian models; and four of his works - (1) Almain Kaiser, (2) Psyche, (3) Hippolyta, and (4) Tydeus.

#### C. Old Pictures in Florence

- a. Nicolo Pisano - (mentioned above).
- b. Ghiberti (1378-1455) - a Florentine sculptor, also important for perspective in painting, whose ideal combined religious feeling with classical beauty.

#### D. My Last Duchess



- a. Claus of Innsbruck - an imaginary Renaissance sculptor and his work - (1) Neptune taming a sea horse.

E. The Statue and the Bust

- a. Giovanni of Bologna( John of Douay) - (c.1524-1608) - an Italian Renaissance sculptor who combined technical knowledge and fine poetic feeling, and (1) Statue of Duke Ferdinand.

F. Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day

- a. Contains a general criticism of the early Christian attitude toward ~~art~~ bodily perfection in art.

G. The Bishop Orders his Tomb

- a. Imaginary work, characteristic of the church named, and of the decadent Renaissance period.

H. The Ring and the Book

- a. Baccio Bandinelli - a Florentine sculptor and his work, a statue of (1) John of the Black Bands, the father of Cosimo de' Medici.
- b. Pasquin's Statue - a work of uncertain origin in Rome. (Perhaps not Italianate in origin).
- c. The Fountain of the Tritons - designed in the seventeenth century.
- d. Bocca- dell' Verita - the fabled test for the verity of witnesses, a mask of stone in the portico of the church Sta. Maria in Cormedin.

2. TABULATION -- Altogether, then, eight poems from the two hundred twenty-two deal with Italian sculpture. Six historical sculptors and

seven pieces of work in actual existence are named. Two purely imaginative sculptors figure in the poems, and two poems, My Last Duchess and The Bishop Orders his Tomb deal with imaginary sculpture. All references, so far as can be determined, conform entirely to the facts.

3. HISTORICAL SCOPE -- Viewing his treatment of Italian sculpture from the historical angle, one finds that nearly every important phase of its development is embodied in some poem, though the chronological order is not followed. In Sordello, the very beginnings of Renaissance art are suggested concerning "the Pisan pair", in a few phrases that help to give perspective and background to the picture of the times. In the next poem, however, Pippa Passes, Browning takes his readers across the entire field of development, to a picture of the life of modern art students in Italy.

Old Pictures in Florence goes again to the beginning, as a modern reader of art history sees it, with another mention of Nicolo; but here the treatment is imaginative and whimsical, while the same reference was used in Sordello as serious setting.

4. ART STUDENTS IN PIPPA PASSES -- This poem contains the very interesting treatment of modern art life among students. Canova represents the ideal of sculpture and Jules, the student who is seeking to attain. For the only time, with the exception of A Soul's Tragedy, Browning descends to the level of prose as a medium of speech for his knaves and villains. All the crude reality of life among the art students, their jealousy of one with higher ideals than their own, the poet gives us in detail by

means of their prose speeches, returning, however, to blank verse for the ideals of Jules, and the aspirations of Phene's awakening soul. Love of personality and an appreciation of the possibilities of human development are written large throughout the poems of Browning; but nowhere is this idea in relation to art more definitely expressed than in the words of Jules. An artist of the highest ideals, he has just realized through the singing of Pippa, that a woman's soul is in his keeping. He says:

"Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff

Be Art - and further, to evoke a soul

From form be nothing? This new soul is mine."

5. IMAGINARY SCULPTURE -- My Last Duchess is entirely imaginary; but it so fully sums up in a short poem the entire decadent Renaissance attitude toward art, that no real names could improve it. Its one mention of sculpture, "Neptune taming a sea horse, which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me," does more, however, than give vividness to the picture. It is a brief, powerful suggestion of (1) admiration for art because it was fashionable, (2) of the intellectual but heartless Duke's attitude of taming the Duchess, (3) of the classical subject matter and bronze material that were in vogue at the time.

The Bishop Orders His Tomb is a poem containing just as strong a portrayal of art in the decadent Renaissance. But instead of the cruel, worldly, domineering, fashionable, secular Duke, one finds the equally worldly as well as immoral Bishop, worshipping art as something of financial worth, something by means of which the rival Gandolf can be stirred to a new envy.

6. THE NUDE IN SCULPTURE -- Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day has a section devoted to the visit of the seeker for religious truth to Rome. In this Browning takes occasion to rebuke the "filthy saints" whose religious zeal led them to destroy ancient statuary because it represented physical beauty. While the main subject of the poem is religion, not art, it contains incidentally one of his best defenses of the nude in sculpture. He sees the "noble daring, steadfast duty, the heroic in action or in passion," or even the merely beautiful in a physical way - all as presented in sculpture, and views them all as a fitting token of the beauty God has placed in the world. Further light on the attitude of Browning toward the nude in art may be gained from The Lady and the Painter, a non-Italianate poem, written later in his life. In the limits of the present paper, it is of interest only because it proves the attitude of Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day to have been a permanent one.

7. USE FOR DRAMATIC POSSIBILITIES -- In The Statue and the Bust the art references were used, not for their own sake, but because they contained a situation with dramatic possibilities. The statue of the Duke exists as Browning pictured it; while the bust of the lady is an addition for poetic purposes. While imaginary, however, it conforms to the spirit of the palace it was represented as adorning; for traces of Robbia ware, the material of which it was made, still adorned the cornices of the palace at the time when the poem was written.

8. PHYSICAL SETTING -- The Ring and the Book, with its few references to pieces of sculpture in Florence and Rome, is, of all those named, the one in which the art is made least prominent. It contains no picture of a

period, no discussion of an attitude toward art, no art references as an aid to the poetical background of the times. It simply names works of sculpture as a device to aid us in establishing the physical setting. Each tells us that at such and such a place, in sight of the statue named, a certain event occurred. In one instance, that of the fountain of the Tritons, in part I, the description of the immovable sculpture, "high--- out o' the way o' the motley, merchandising multitude", is an example of contrast in setting.

9. TECHNICAL TERMS -- Though these poems penetrate so deeply into the history of art and the feelings of the artist, very few technical terms concerning sculpture are used in the Italianate poems. "Caritellas", in the description of the fountain just mentioned, probably meaning cartellas, the sculptured tablets for inscriptions, may be classed as such a technical term. "Caryatides", female figures in sculpture, used as a support, are named in the description of the castle, where Sordello lived, at Goito; but the term is Greek in origin.

10. SOURCE OF BROWNING'S KNOWLEDGE -- In every case where real works of sculpture are used in the poems, Browning had seen what he described. Pippa Passes, published in 1841, contains references to the works of Canova; and the life of Venetian art students forms a considerable section of the poem. In 1838, Browning went to Italy for the first time, (though some biographers insist on a trip in 1834) was in Venice, and its surrounding places, as well as in the city he speaks of as "delicious Asola". That he studied the works of Canova, we know from the fact that a letter to Miss Haworth expresses his disappointment in him. This one visit



explains the source of all his references in Pippa Passes; though his statement about disappointment in Canova implies that his ideas had been formed before he left England. In this poem, as well as in all of those concerning sculpture, the conclusion that his references are based on observation is certain; but that observation may have been preceded by an interest from reading or from visits to London studios.

All the other poems mentioned in this section were written after the Brownings had lived some time in Italy. The only definite places named are Rome and Florence; and in each of these places they had spent some time before these particular works were given to the world.

\*\*\*\*\*

## II. MUSIC

### 1. OUTLINE OF REFERENCES TO MUSIC --

#### A. The Italian in England

- a. Tenebrae - as sung in an Italian cathedral.

#### B. The Englishman in Italy

- a. Bellini(1801-1835) - an Italian opera composer, belonging to the modern group.

#### C. A Toccato of Galuppi's -

- a. Galuppi(1706-1785) - a composer of melodious rather than original operas, whose workmanship was superior to his contemporaries in harmony and orchestration.

#### D. Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha

- a. Palestrina(1526-1594) - a composer who is most famous for saving music to the church by submitting some when eccles-



istical authorities were about to forbid its use.

E. Bishop Blougram's Apology -

a. Verdi(1813-1901) - One of the greatest modern opera composers, known through Il Trovatore , Rigoletto, and La Traviata.

b. Rossini(1792-1868) - a composer whose success antedates that of Verdi, best known by his opera, William Tell.

F. Abt Vogler

a. Abt or Abbe Vogler(1749-1814) - an organist and composer of Bavarian birth, much of whose study and public work were done in Italy. Though he invented a new system of fingering for the harpsichord, and a new system of musical theory, his ideas were empirical.

G. Youth and Art

a. Grisi(1811-1869) - an Italian opera singer with a brilliant dramatic soprano voice, who sang in the productions of Rossini and Bellini.

H. The Ring and the Book

a. References to church music in Italy. Part I - Nunc dimittis and the Magnificat; Part VI - the Ave Maria and the Angelus; Part XII - Pater, Ave, and Salve Regni Coeli.

I. Red Cotton Night-Cap Country

a. Guarnerius(1687-1745), Joseph del Gesu- one of the most famous violin makers, who worked for boldness of outline and massive construction instead of perfection of form, and secured in consequence, a robust tone.

- b. Stradivarius, Antonio(1644-1737) - whose final model, with its soft varnish now irrecoverable, brought violin making to its highest perfection.
- c. Corelli(1653-1713) - a violin player and composer, who, though he employed only a limited portion of the compass of his instrument, made an epoch in chamber music and had an influence on Bach.
- d. Paganini(1781-1840) - a violinplayer who achieved such success that his name still stands for all that is wonderful in execution on that instrument.

J. With Charles Avison

- a. Buononcini(1672-1750?) - the author of a musical treatise, whose chief claim to fame lies in the fact that he influenced Handel and Scarlatti.
- b. Geminiani(c.1680-1762) - a violinist of considerable ability; but as a composer, dry and deficient in melody.

2. TABULATION -- In music ten poems contain some Italianate quality. Thirteen musicians are named, but no musical work of any famous composer is mentioned. In two poems, The Italian in England, and The Ring and the Book, the names of Catholic hymns are used. However they are not in a poem whose chief subject is music, nor are they mentioned because Browning deliberately wished to write about that art. They form a part of the Italian consciousness, are stages in daily life and mark the passage of time, in a highly poetic way and one characteristic of that nation. In The Italian in England the Tenebrae indicates the time when the woman assisting the patriot can

communicate with his friends.

In The Ring and the Book , Part IV, the Magnificat signifies the triumph of the old woman in securing from the poor washer-woman the babe she later married to Guido; the Nunc dimittis suggests her joy after the wedding has actually taken place. In Part V, the Ave and the Angelus denote time; but the latter carries with it a suggestion of atmosphere also. In Part XII, the Pater, Ave, and Salve Regni Coeli are named by Guido in his last speech in a request for prayers for his soul.

3. USE FOR COMPARATIVE PURPOSES -- Five different poems contain a mention of Italian musicians for purposes of comparison (or contrast). The Englishman in Italy contrasts the fiddlers, fifers and drummers at the Feast of the Rosary's Virgin to Bellini. Bishop Blougram's Apology portrays the politic churchman's admission that wise men look beneath his pretense of a belief in the winking Virgin and class him either as a knave or a fool. This the Bishop likens to Verdi at the close of his worst opera. Though the populace applauded, he looked beyond them, for the judgment of the master, Rossini. In Youth and Art, the struggling girl with operatic aspirations who missees a possibility of happiness in her quest for fame, compares herself with Grisi. Surpassing that prima donna constitutes the height of her dream of happiness. Red Cotton Night-Cap Country , with its fantastic symbolism, mentions the many varieties of that-a night caps and compares them to the various kinds of violins then on exhibition at Kensington. In this connection Guarnerius and Straduarus are mentioned as makers of violins, and Corelli and Paganini as performers.

With Charles Avison, the only poem that has a comparative estimate of musicians appreciated in London, names Buononcini and Geminiani as worthy of comparison with Dvorak, Listz, and Handel. It is worthy of note that Rossini, Ballini, and Verdi, of the modern school among the Italians, are not named in any such connection.

4. USE AS PRINCIPAL SUBJECT MATTER -- Abt Vogler, A Toccato of Galuppi's, Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha, and With Charles Avison, all deal with music as the principal subject. Only in the first two, however, can the musician lay claim to being an Italianate one; and of these Abt Vogler is probably the finest poem on that subject in the English language. It contains a perfect idealized expression of the musician's aims; and a thorough knowledge of his technique. Like A Toccato of Galuppi's, it is based on extemporisation. Abt Vogler muses on the stately but transitory castle of music he has built; while 'toccato' probably refers to an imaginary improvisation on the harpsichord - a frequent occurrence ~~on-the-harpsichord~~ in Galuppi's time. But where the latter deals with the effect on the listeners, Abt Vogler voices the musicians own reflections on his fleeting "castle". Where a 'Toccato' closes with dust and ashes, the other goes on to the 'ineffable name' and the belief in the future existence of all that we have "hoped, or willed, or dreamed of good". The one encloses hope in the grave; the other opens Heaven. In a 'Toccato', the transitory character of human life accords with the music Galuppi is playing; and many terms, such as 'lesser thirds,' "sixths diminished," "suspensions," "solutions," "com-miserating sevenths," express the different phases of the listener's mood.

5. TECHNICAL TERMS -- No attempt is made within the limits of this paper to explain technical musical terms; for with the exception of toccato, meaning a light touch piece, an overture, they are non-Italianate. Also extensive explanations of them have already been made in various articles among the Browning Society papers.

6. LACK OF ITALIAN MUSICAL REFERENCES -- The number of references to Italian musicians is comparatively small, even though the treatment of music in a few poems is unsurpassed. Especially when one considers that the great modern group of Italian opera composers were so near Browning in both time and place, their mention seems insignificant. Verdi, the best known of them appears in Browning's poems only once, and then with a mention of his worst opera. That the Brownings heard at least one of his compositions, we learn from a letter of 1853, by Mrs. Browning. She speaks of their having heard Il Trovatore, at the Pergola in Florence, and concludes with the peculiarly suggestive remark, "Very passionate and dramatic surely."

There are probably several reasons for this neglect of Italian opera composers. No poet, least of all Browning, is prone to bestow unmitigated praise upon his contemporaries. He, in particular, loved to choose an obscure Galuppi or an Andrea del Sarto, instead of a Michael Angelo or a Raphael, as a personality about whom to weave a poem. But a more potent reason lies in the differing views of the Italian school and the musicians of Northern Europe. A musician who had been trained in the German music of London concerts and operas could hardly be expected to welcome the operas of Verdi and Rossini with anything approaching ecstatic admiration.



At the most he might venture a half-conciliatory remark, such as Mrs. Browning's on Il Trovatore.

7. CONFORMITY TO THE FACTS -- Nearly all of the musical references are true to the facts, at least with allowance for poetic license in idealization. However the Verdi reference in Bishop Blougram's Apology is not so easily explained. The statement concerns Verdi's worst opera, and mentions it as being given in Florence with Rossini present. As a matter of fact, "Un Giorno di Regno," conceded to be his worst, and the only one that was an absolute failure, was given at Milan, not Florence, and was probably never repeated. "Macbeth," is the only one that was given first at Florence, and it met with a moderate degree of success.

8. SOURCE OF BROWNING'S KNOWLEDGE -- Browning's life in Italy probably had very little influence on his use of music in his poems, since the facts he uses are such as he might very easily have known without such a source of knowledge. This is especially evident when one considers the fact that six of the thirteen musicians he names performed in London, and three of them, Grisi, Bellini, and Paginini, in Browning's own time. It is even probable that he attended the concerts. Rossini was living in Florence from 1847 to 1855 - the same time the Brownings were there. But while letter after letter to friends at home refers to Story, Powers, or Leighton, there is absolute silence concerning Rossini.

\*\*\*\*\*

### III. POETRY

#### A. Paracelsus

a. Aprile - an imaginary poet.



B. Sordello

- a. Sordello(13th. century) - the most famous of the Mantuan  
troubadours.
- b. Nina ) contemporaries of Sordello
- c. Alcamo
- d. Plara - Imaginary poet
- e. Bocafoli - "
- f. Eglamor - "

C. Up at a Villa

- a. Dante(1265-1321) - the greatest Italian poet, author of the  
Divine Comedy, advocate of the vulgar tongue, lover of Beatrice.
- b. Petrarch(1304-1374) - poet and scholar, the author of Latin  
treatises, and the sonnet sequences to Laura.
- c. Boccaccio(1313-1375) - the author of some poetry, but his chief  
fame rests on his prose novella.

D. Old Pictures in Florence

- a. Dante

E. Time's Revenges

- a. Dante

F. One Word More

- a. Dante

G. Apparent Failure

- a. Petrarch

H. The Ring and the Book

- a. Dante
- b. Marino(1569-1625) - a poet of disreputable life, leader of the Secentisimo period, whose aim was to excite wonder by novelties, and to cloak poverty of subject under form.
- c. Sacchetti(1335-1400) - a poet and novelist, who left many unpublished sonnetti, canzoni, ballate, and madrigale, and whose novelle throw valuable light on the manners of his age.
- d. Tasso(1544-1595) - the author of the best Italian epic, "Jerusalem Delivered," and a man of serious, religious purpose, deep melancholy, and aspiration for ideal perfection.
- e. Pietro Aretino(1492-1556) - the author of satirical sonnets, burlesques, comedies, a man of immoral life.
- f. Petrarch
- g. Tommaseo(1803-1874) - a modern Italian poet, author of the inscription to Mrs. Browning, placed by the city of Florence on the walls of Casa Guidi.

#### I. The Inn Album

- a. Inferno - a part of Dante's Divine Comedy.
- 2. TABULATION -- In nine poems altogether, mention is made of an Italian poet. Four imaginary writers and eleven who are prominent in the history of Italian verse compose the list. Of these, Dante is given the most prominent place, for his name occurs in six poems out of the nine.
- 3. TIME IN BROWNING'S CAREER -- Within the first eight years of Browning's career, he published four long poems. Three of these deal in some way with the life of a poet. After the first period, there is no extended discussion of this sort, unless it be One Word More, which is rather a

study in comparative arts and their relation to love. Of these four early poems, Pauline, 1833, Paracelsus, 1835, Strafford, 1837, and Sordello, 1840, the third is the only exception. Pauline is an autobiographical sketch of a poet's early doubts and aspirations, while Paracelsus and Sordello deal with Italian writers of verse. Since these are all in the same period, the early one, it is clear that Browning must have been formulating his ideas of a poet. But he has chosen to express these conclusions by giving the negative side, not the positive. For Aprile, Sordello, Eglamor, Plara, Bocafoli, and in a lesser degree, Nina and Alcamo, are all failures: not all of them absolute and hopeless, for Sordello dies with a moral victory won, Aprile is successful only in part, Nina and Alcamo have strength and grace - but still they have not attained.

4. SORDELLO -- In Sordello, the character of that name has a shadowy existence in history as the most famous of the Italian troubadors. He seems to have been confused with another Sordello who was a politician and a man of action; but such scant facts as can be gathered speak only of scandals and tavern brawls. Consequently Browning's portrait of him is an idealization; and he probably chose Sordello instead of some better known poet in order that the facts might not interfere with the framework of fancy he wished to weave about him. The thirty books he read on the history of the period were not to add to his knowledge about the troubadour, but since even the idealized Sordello had to be represented as having lived, to give the correct background for his life and actions.

Browning shows that Sordello failed because - (1) he loved the applause he received rather than the poetry itself, (2) the aspirations of the poet and of the man were at war within him, (3) he lacked feeling for humanity, (4) he was not decisive enough to succeed when he attempted action. The moral victory at the close is for dramatic purposes, but the theme is still the same - the failure of a poet.

5. OTHER TYPES OF POETS -- Eglamor, a purely imaginary poet in Sordello, has made verse his only ambition. Lacking all perception of his life as a man, when he is conquered in verse-making, he dies. Plara stands for the poet without depth or genius, unable to write anything of thought value, polishing his poems until they become merely pretty words, lacking utterly in interpretation of human life. Bocafoli, with his "stark-naked" psalms," represents the sensualist. Nina and Alcamo, the contemporaries of Sordello, stand respectively for strength and grace; and Browning represents the low voice as saying of them to Sordello: -

"Nina's strength, but Alcamo's the grace:

Each neutralises each then! Search your fill;

You get no whole and perfect Poet - still

New Ninas, Alcamos, till time's midnight

Shrouds all - or better say, the shutting light

Of a forgotten yesterday."

All these portraits, with that of Aprile, the foil for Paracelsus, who typifies love, as the latter represents knowledge, suggests the conclusion - "You get no whole and perfect poet." This, then, must have

been Browning's own conclusion. But naturally enough he does not picture for us a poet who represents what he himself has concluded to strive for. By what his failures do not represent, however, a conclusion concerning his ideals at this time can be formed. The most significant fact is that none of his group of failures represents an intelligent, unselfish interest in humanity.

6. DANTE -- Of the great Italian men of letters, Dante is the only one mentioned in *Sordello*. With the exception of Memorabilia, and the Shelley references in Pauline, Browning pays him the most perfect tribute he ever gave any writer, in the last two lines of the following quotation;

"Dante, pacer of the shore,  
Where glutted hell disgorgeth filthiest gloom,  
Unbitten by its whirling sulphur-spume,  
Or whence the grieved and obscure waters slope,  
Into a darkness quieted by hope;  
Plucker of amaranths grown beneath God's eye  
In gracious twilights where his chosen lie."

Keeping in mind the fact that Dante's "Divine Comedy" refers to *Sordello* and that his "De Vulgari Eloquio" praises him because he had first attempted to establish an Italian vernacular, Browning, in the above passage refers to *Sordello* as the forerunner of Dante. Again, in the same poem, Dante is mentioned as having called the Palma of Browning's poem *Cunizza*, and as having taken advantage of *Sordello*'s lost chance to establish a vernacular.

In most of the other poems, the references to Dante are merely



incidental. Up at a Villa names the great triumvirate , Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio as standing in the popular mind for all that is great in Italian letters. Time's Revenges refers to Dante as being a poor, starving poet's idea of the highest possible fame. Apparent Failure uses Petrarch as an illustration of a man who has made his birth-place famous.

7. MANNER OF OTHER REFERENCES -- In The Ring and the Book , Dante, Marino, Sacchetti, Tasso, Aretino, and Petrarch, are used by way of making comparisons; and each reference of this sort is peculiarly true to the facts about the poets life or his writings. For instance, Guido, cruel, vulgar, and with no fineness of feeling, refers to some of the most sordid stories of Boccaccio, the realist; and the forged letters from Pompilia to Franceschini are compared to the writings of the black-mailer and profligate, Pietro Aretino.

8. LACK OF HISTORICAL ACCURACY CONCERNING DANTE -- The only other reference important enough for discussion here is the one to Dante in One Word More. In this poem, Browning's most beautiful tribute to his wife, he represents each artist as wishing to do some work for no other purpose than to honor his Margerita or his Beatrice. Dante, he says, once prepared to paint an angel. This statement is based on a passage from the "Vita Nuova." Browning, either intentionally or unintentionally, but probably the former, to make it accord with his poetic conception, departs from the facts in two important particulars. (1) Dante plainly states that his attempt at the drawing grew out of his meditations on the anniversary of the death of Beatrice, and (2) the people who broke in upon him were those of his own town, and he apologized to them for his lack of salutation

at first by saying , "Another was with me." Browning assumes - (1) that Dante drew the picture to please Beatrice, and (2) that the people who interrupted were his own thoughts about the characters of his Inferno.

9. **EXTENT AND SOURCE OF BROWNING'S LITERARY KNOWLEDGE** -- Browning displays no extraordinary knowledge of Italian literature. It may be above the average, but it is no more than the student might very readily acquire without taking a trip to Italy or residing there. However, the ordinary student, even if he were a poet, would not ordinarily put so much of the knowledge into his writings as Browning has done. The stimulus, then, of Italy, probably led to the embodiment in his poems of such knowledge as he already possessed; for he seems to have made no particular study of Italian literature after going to that country. Scattering references to the reading of Italian books are found in the Browning letters, but they are few compared to those concerning sculpture and painting. Except the one reference to Dante, noted above, all the statements are correct in both fact and spirit.

10. **IMAGINARY VERSUS REAL POETS** -- The amount of space given to imaginary poets over that devoted to those of history is surprising. The second-rate Italian poet with his racial and national characteristics is used to typify Browning's idea of failure. Very little space is given to formal praise of Italian poets or poetry. The only contemporary whom Browning names is Tommaseo; and he is referred to only as the author of the inscription to the memory of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

\*\*\*\*\*



## IV. ARCHITECTURE

## 1. OUTLINE OF REFERENCES TO ARCHITECTURE

A. Sordello

- a. Goito - an imaginary 13th. century castle, influencing the life of Sordello by its beauty and solitude.
- b. St. Mark's - a great landmark of Italian architecture, built from the 9th. to the 15th. centuries, and the most splendid piece of polychromatic architecture in Europe.
- c. Piombi - torture cells under the Ducal palace at Venice.
- d. San Pietro(Martire) - a Veronese Gothic church of 1350.
- e. St. Francis - a Lombard Gothic church at Bassano.
- f. Castle Angelo - a huge Roman fortress constructed in the time of Hadrian.
- g. San Miniato - a Florentine church built in Central Romanesque style.
- h. St. Eufemia - a 13th. century Veronese church, now modernized internally.

B. Pippa Passes

- a. St. Mark's- Venice
- b. Possagno Church - designed by Canova in 1819 as a place for statues of religious subjects.
- c. Fenice(or Phoenix) - the best modern theatre of Venice, built in 1836.
- d. Academy of Fine Arts- a Renaissance building in Venice.
- e. Duomo of Asola
- f. Pippa's Tower

g. Castle of Kate(at Asola) - the banqueting hall of which is now a theatre.

h. Turret - at Asola

i. Palace - "

j. Mill(now a lace school) - at Asola

C. A\*Toccato of Galuppi's

a. St. Mark's

D. Old Pictures in Florence

a. Campanile - the bell tower of the Florentine duomo, built by Giotto in 1332, an architectural triumph in beauty and grandeur.

b. San Spirito - a 14th. century Florentine church.

c. Ognissanti - a Florentine church.

d. Duomo- the Florentine cathederal, famous for its dome of 1420, its beautiful sculptural exterior and its cold brown interior.

E. By the Fire-Side

a. Chapel near Bagna di Lucca

F. The Guardian Angel

a. Chapel at Fano

G. The Boy and the Angel

a. St. Peter's - in process of construction during the 16th. and 17th. centuries- a building on which the former importance of the church is written large. It is built on the Greek cross plan and surmounted by the dome of Michael Angelo, the most nobly beautiful of architectural creations.

H. The Italian in England

a. Duomo at Padua- a 16th. century building of admirable

proportions.

I. In a Gondola

a. Pucci Palace - a Venetian palace.

J. The Statue and the Bust

a. Palace Antónori - an example of Renaissance secular architecture, c. 1481 in Florence

b. Palace Ricardi - a Florentine building, the earliest and finest example of secular Renaissance architecture.

K. Luria

a. Florentine Duomo

L. Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day

a. St. Peter's - Rome

M. Fra Lippo Lippi

a. Carmine - a 15th. century church and convent in Florence, containing frescoes by Masaccio and Filippino Lippi.

b. Palace of the Medici - Florence

c. St. Laurence(or San Lorenzo) - a Florentine Renaissance church, rebuilt c. 1425.

d. St. Ambrose - a Florentine church, the reputed scene of a transubstantiation miracle in 1476

N. Andrea del Sarto

a. Chapel and convent wall in Florence

O. The Bishop Orders his Tomb

a. St. Praxed's(San Prassede) - a church in Rome, founded on the former site of a refuge for persecuted Christians. It

is notable for the beauty of its stone work and mosaics,  
one of its rich chapels being called Orto del Paradiso.

The building is old but was restored in the 15th. century.

- b. Il Gesu - an ornate sixteenth century church in Rome,  
representing the retrograde movement in architecture.

P. Bishop Blougram's Apology

- a. Vatican - the papal palace at Rome, most of which as it <sup>is</sup>  
exists now was built earlier than the 15th. century.

Q. One Word More

- a. San Miniato - Florence

R. Abt Vogler

- a. St. Peter's - Rome

S. The Ring and the Book

(I). Ring and the Book

- a. Palace Ricardi - Florence
- b. San Lorenzo Church - Florence
- c. Felice Church - a little grey-walled Florentine church  
mostly in a very ancient Romanesque style, which could  
be seen from the windows of Casa Guidi.
- d. Palace Fiano - an example of secular architecture in  
Rome, built c. 1300
- e. Palace Ruspoli - built by the Rucellai family in 1586  
with one of the finest white marble stair cases in Rome.
- f. Castle Angelo - Rome

(II). Half-Rome

- a. San Lorenzo - Rome
- b. Palace Ruspoli - Rome

(III). The Other Half-Rome

- a. Saint Anna - a monastery in Rome
- b. San Lorenzo - Rome

(IV). Tertium Quid

- a. San Lorenzo - Rome
- b. Vatican - Rome

(V). Count Guido Franceschini

- a. Tordinona - Rome
- b. New Prisons - Rome
- c. Church Lorenzo - Rome

(VI). Guiseppe Caponsacchi

- a. Pieve(Sta. Maria della Pieve) - a great church in Arezzo  
built in the capricious extravagant style of the 13th.  
century.
- b. Lorenzo - Rome
- c. Duomo

(VII). Pompilia

- a. Lorenzo - Rome
- b. San Giovanni - Tuscan church built in Rome at the expense  
of the Florentines.
- c. Pieve - Arezzo

(VIII). Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis

- a. Sistine - a chapel of the Vatican at Rome, the most extreme  
example of figure painting in interior decorations,

but justified by the excellence of the work. The ceiling is Michael Angelo's , and on the altar wall is his Last Judgment.

(IX). Juris Doctor Johannes- Baptista Bottinius

a. none

(X). The Pope

a. Vatican - Rome

b. Pieve - Arezzo

c. Monastery of the Convertites - Rome, founded in 1584,  
for the spiritual care of the sick.

(XI). Guido

a. Certosa - a beautifully situated, very richly built  
monastery of the Carthusians, in Val Emo, four miles  
from Florence, built in the 14th. century Gothic style.

b. Vallambrosa Convent- situated near Florence, founded c.  
1650 by a repentant profligate of high rank.

c. Palace in Via Larga - secular Florentine architecture.

d. San Lorenzo - Rome

e. Vatican - Rome

(XII). The Book and the Ring

a. New Prisons - Rome

b. San Lorenzo - Rome

c. Monastery of the Convertites - Rome

Mary Magdalen o' the Convertites- Rome

T. Fifine at the Fair

- a. St. Mark's - Venice

U. Pacchiarotto

- a. San Bernardino - a Renaissance church at Siena, with an oratory containing work of Beccafumi, Pacchia, Pacchiarotto.
- b. Duomo of Siena - an unfinished cathedral, the most purely Gothic of those in Italy, unrivalled in solemnity and splendor.

V. Filippo Baldimucci

- a. San Frediano - a modern Florentine church.

W. Pietro of Abano

- a. Lateran - formerly the Papal residence, though the present structure, of 1586 was never used for that purpose and is now a museum of classical sculpture and early Christian remains.

X. With Francis Furini

- a. Saint Sano(or Ansano) - a Florentine parish church

Y. Ponte dell' Angelo

- a. A house along the bridge, unimportant architecturally but connected with an old legend which is the subject of the poem.

2. ~~TABULATION~~ -- Two architects are mentioned, as such, in Old Pictures in Florence . They are Taddeo Gaddi and Giotto, the dates of the latter being 1267? - 1337, and of the former, c.1300 - 1366. Twenty-five poems, a little more than one-ninth of the entire number, (two hundred twenty-two) contain the name or names of some Italian architectural structure. In these, about fifty-five Italian buildings are named. Of this number



almost exactly one-third are in Florence, and one or two less than another third are in Rome. Venice and Asola contain mention of five and seven respectively; but all the remaining ones have to content themselves with a reference to one, two, or three buildings. The entire number, fifty-five, is divided between thirteen different towns.

3. REASONS FOR AMOUNT AT FLORENCE AND ROME -- There are two reasons why the number of buildings named at Rome and Florence is just what would be expected - (1) the former has been the historical and political center of Italy ever since the beginning, and the latter is the art center of the world; (2) Browning spent a considerable amount of time at Rome, both in 1844, during his second trip to Italy, and in his visits of 1853 and 1854; while Florence was his home for fifteen years.

The large number of beautiful churches in Italy also has an important influence on the kind of buildings Browning names. Ecclesiastical buildings form something more than half of the entire list; while the remaining ones are about equally divided between those for state use and private buildings of a secular character. St. Mark's, St. Peter's, the Vatican, and the Florentine Duomo, all buildings of world interest, lead in the number of poems in which they receive mention.

4. SOURCE OF BROWNING'S KNOWLEDGE -- Browning had seen almost if not every one of the Italian buildings he names in his poems. Be assured, therefore, that he knew whereof he wrote. Sordello, published in 1840, is concerned with buildings at Venice, Bassano, Verona, and Rome, and Florence; but the references to the last two are merely incidental. The other cities he had visited in 1838, along with his "delicious Asola," which became the scene of Pippa Passes in 1841. Possagno, with its

art of Canova, had also been visited in 1838. (See letter to Miss Hawthth, expressing his disappointment in Canova.) A Toccato of Galuppi's, 1855, refers to St. Mark's in Venice, mentioned above. The distinct Setting of Old Pictures in Florence was given to the world after Browning had lived in that city nine years. By the Fire-Side, referring to the chapel in the gorge, was written either during the visit to Bagna di Lucca in 1853, or very shortly after it. It was published in 1855.

It is the same with The Boy and the Angel (Rome), 1842; The Italian in England(Padua), 1845; In a Gondola(Venice), 1842; The Statue and the Bust (Florence), 1855; Luria (Florence) , 1846; Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day(Rome), 1850; Fra Lippe Lippi (Florence), 1855; The Bishop Orders his Tomb(Rome), 1845; Bishop Blougram's Apology (Rome), 1855; One Word More (Florence), 1855; Abt Vogler (Rome), 1864; Pacchiarotto (Siena), 1876. Padua and Venice were visited in 1838, Rome in 1844, Florence in 1846, if not sooner, and Siena in 1850.

The only exception to the statement that Browning visited all the places he described is Arezzo. The Pieve, at this place, he describes with many details in The Ring and the Book. No certain statement is to be found of a visit to Arezzo. They had planned to visit this city on their way to Rome, in September 1847; but this trip seems to have been given up. But later trips to Rome were made; and while Arezzo is not named in any of the accounts, it is possible that it was an unmentioned stopping-place.

5. PROCEDURE IN THE RING AND THE BOOK -- The Ring and the Book is an

interesting example of Browning's procedure in the case of an architectural work he wished to employ. Florence and Rome are the cities chiefly concerned with the action of the poem; and by this time (1864-1868) Browning had long been familiar with both. However the poem was written in England; and in a letter to Frederic Leighton, October 17, 1864, Browning asked him to go into the church of St. Lorenzo, at Rome, where Leighton was then, look at it carefully, and describe it to him. He asked particularly about the arrangement of the building, nave, pillars, the number of altars, and the "Crucifixion" by Guido, over the altar, and added that he did not care for the outside. This church Browning used more than any other in The Ring and the Book, making it the scene of the baptism and marriage of Pompilia, as well as the place to which their dead bodies (those of Pompilia and her foster parents) were taken. Mr. Kenyon (in his revision of the life of Browning) says that the poet was always accustomed to visualize a scene completely and to keep it before him as he wrote. This statement applies in the case of The Ring and the Book. Though he had seen the church of San Lorenzo, which he wished to describe, he wrote to inquire about some details that were not entirely clear.

6. MANNER OF EMPLOYING ARCHITECTURE -- When the amount of architecture that Browning uses is first considered, it seems enormously large. But such an unmodified conclusion would result only from a failure to take into consideration the manner in which he uses it. About ten of the buildings he names are of no importance whatever from an architectural

standpoint, nor are they of any importance historically, including those at Asola and a few others. The most of the remaining ones are discussed either in histories of architecture or in guide books. But with very few exceptions, Browning does not employ them for the sake of architecture. He had a story to tell, and for that story a location was necessary. Often he used such buildings as had been mentioned in the original events on which he based his poem. There are, to be sure, numerous other instances in which the particular church or castle he names suits the tone of the story just a trifle better than any other building he could have found. But his primary object was not the beauty of architecture. Painters and musicians become the chief concern of his most beautiful poems; but never architects. Sordello is an example of an extended description harmonizing with the character whose boy-hood home it was; but the character is entirely imaginary as well as the castle.

7. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AUTHORS -- Wordsworth has several poems - Old Abbeys, Inside of King's College Chapel, In the Cathedral at Cologne, and others that, in the space of a short poem, deal with architecture in an appreciative way. Byron's Elegy on Newstead Abbey is another similar example. But Browning, whose works, by the way, contain no sonnets, did not deal with any such effusions of subjective emotion over inanimate objects. His only description of architecture as something appealing to the emotions and imagination of man is found in Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day. In it the poet represents himself as searching for religious truth and being taken to visit St. Peter's at Rome. Then follows the wonderfully

comprehensive description:

"And what is this that rises propped,  
 With pillars of prodigious girth ?  
 Is it really on the earth,  
 This miraculous Dome of God?  
 Has the angel's measuring-rod  
 Which numbers cubits, gem from gem,  
 'Twixt the gates of the New Jerusalem,  
 Meted it out - and what he meted,  
 Have the sons of men completed ?  
 - Binding ever as he bade,  
 Columns in the colonnade  
 With arms wide open to embrace  
 The entry of the human race."

But even in this instance, Browning, before his description is finished, cannot content himself with mere abstract statements of beauty. He turns to the builders and to its purpose - for humanity. Consequently, even with his numerous mention of works of architecture, Browning has far less treatment of its artistic side than such a writer as Wordsworth, or many another who has scarcely gone outside his native land for material.

\*\*\*\*\*

## V. PAINTING

### 1. OUTLINE OF REFERENCES TO PAINTING --

#### A. Pauline

- a. Polidore da Caravaggio(c.1492-1543) - a celebrated painter of  
friezes in the Vatican, and (1) Andromeda, a painting by him.

#### B. Sordello

- a. Guido of Siena(c.1250) - the disputed artist of a "Virgin and  
Child," with a date that may be either 1221, or 1281, and if  
the former, some of Cimabue's claims are disturbed by his  
precedence.
- b. Guido Reni(1575-1642 ) - a prime master in the Bolognese  
school, faithful to its eclectic principles, working with  
considerable artistic feeling but still a certain core of  
the commonplace.

- c. Andromeda of Caravaggio

#### C. Pippa Passes

- a. Annibale Caracci(burlesque form - Hannibal Scratchy) - (1560-  
1609) - with his brother and his uncle, founded the Bolognese  
school, which was eclectic, combining all good points of the  
great masters.
- b. Correggio(1494-1534) - the head of the Lombard school, at  
Parma, a painter of graceful naturalness and sweetness, and  
a great technical power in chiaroscuro.
- c. Titian(c.1477-1534) - ~~the head of the Lombard school~~ - a  
Venetian painter who lacked inventiveness but was the greatest  
of the painters of color, and (1) his Annunciation, 1519, in  
the cathedral at Treviso.

#### D. Old Pictures in Florence

- a. Michael Angelo(1475-1564) - a Florentine master in painting



and in sculpture and architecture as well. No other single personality ever so dominated art as he, with his Italian "terribilita" and- or stormy energy of conception and great dramatic power.

- b. Rafael(1483-1520) - a combined master of (1) draughtsmanship, (2) coloring, (3) graceful composition, was popular and unexcelled in versatility.
- c. Leonardo da Vinci(1452-1519) - the first of the great masters of the high Renaissance, and the earliest to completely master anatomy and technique.
- d. Cavaliere Dello(1404-1464) -an unimportant Florentine painter of frescoes.
- e. Stefano (c.1324?-1357?) - called the 'ape of nature' because he came the closest to nature in an age that was far from it.
- f. Cimabue(1240-c.1302) - the first painter of importance in the revival of the art, the one who formed its first principles, though he owed something to the Pisan sculptors.
- g. Ghirlandajo(1449-1494) - good in his general attainment, but lacking in originality, though remembered for one famous pupil, Michaelangelo.
- h. Sandro(Botticelli) (1444-1510) - a Florentine painter, imbued with a strain of fantasy, mysticism, and allegory.
- i. Lippino(1460-1505) - the son of Fra Lippo Lippi, a painter of considerable skill, the first to introduce detail in antique costumes.



- j. Fra Angelico(1387-1455) - a holy, self-denying painter of faces that sometimes showed a 'sexless religiosity.'
- k. Lorenzo Monaco(1370-1425) - a Florentine monk and painter of much religious sentiment.
- l. Pollajolo(1429-1498) - an important painter whose works show brutality, but who was a close student of muscualar anatomy.
- m. Baldovinetti(1427-1499) - a Florentine, one of a group of scientific realists and naturalists.
- n. Margheritone(c.1236-1289) - an early ~~Tuscan~~ painter whose work shows the stiffness and crude color of the Byzantine school.
- o. Carlo Dolce(1616-1686) - an unimportant Florentine painter of careful workmanship and religious sentimentality.
- p. Giotto(1267-1337) - painter and architect , the real humanizer of the former art.
- q. Andrea Orgagna(1308-1368) - a Florentine painter and artist in other lines.

D. In Three Days

- a. General reference to early art.

E. The Guardian Angel

- a. Guercino(1591-1666) - a Bolognese painter.

F. My Last Duchess

- a. Fra Pandolf - an imaginary artist

G. In a Gondola

- a. Schidone(c.1570-1615) - a portrait painter of the Lombard school, and (1) the Eager Duke, an imaginary work.

- b. Luca Giordano(1632-1705) - called Luke-work-fast because of his father's miserly urging, a painter of of superficiality and facility, and his (1) Prim Saint, an imaginary picture.
- c. Giorgione(Castelfranco)(1477-1510) - a Venetian painter who did for his school what da Vinci had done for Florence twenty years earlier, and (1) Magdalen-imaginary.
- d. Tizian  
(1)"robed counsel-keeping Ser" - imaginary.

H. Waring

- a. Polidore da Caravaggio

I. Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day

- a. Michael Angelo. Also a general discussion of painting.

J. How It Strikes A Contemporary

- a. Titian

K. Pictor Ignotus

- a. Discussion of an imaginary painter with high ideals.

L. Fra Lippo Lippi

- a. Lippi(1406-1469) - a realist of good coloring and technique, a painter of enjoyable pictures showing power of observation.
- b. Angelico
- c. Monaco
- d. Guidi(Masaccio)(1402-1429) - the master of Lippo, a Florentine, and the first to make considerable advance in atmospheric perspective and to make the architectural

background proportionate to the human figures.

M. Andrea del Sarto

- a. Andrea(1487-1531) - a Florentine, the faultless painter,  
with lack of elevation or ideality in his works.
- b. Rafael
- c. Vasari(1511-1571) - a Florentine artist, student of Michael  
Angelo, imitative and feeble as a painter, but interesting  
as an art historian.
- d. Michael Angelo
- e. Leonardo da Vinci

N. Bishop Blougram's Apology

- a. Correggio - and his Jerome
- b. Guilio Romano(1492-1546) - a rather ornate artist, the  
executor of some work in the Vatican.
- c. Rafael - (1) Michael slaying the Dragon

O. One Word More

- a. Rafael - (1) Sistine Madonna  
(2) Madonna Foligno  
(3) Madonna of the Grand Duke  
(4) Madonna of the Lilies
- b. Guido Reni
- c. Lippo
- d. Andrea

P. James Lee's Wife

- a. Da Vinci

Q. A Face

a. Correggio

b. General reference to Tuscan's early art in painting.

R. The Ring and the Book

## (I) The Ring and the Book

a. Ademollo

b. Lionard (da Vinci) - (1) Joconde or Mona Lisa, the woman of the mysterious smile, now in the Louvre.

## (II) Half-Rome

a. Guido Reni - (1) Crucifixion, in Church Lorenzo at Rome

## (III) The Other Half-Rome

a. Carlo Maratti (1625-1713) - a painter at Rome, an imitator of Raphael and the Caracci

## (IV) Tertium Quid

a. Rafael

b. Correggio - and (1) his Leda

## (V) Count Guido

a. Pietro Cortona (1596-1669) - mainly a scenic and fresco painter, the estimate of whom has decreased since his own time.

b. Ciro Ferri (1634-1689) - a pupil of Pietro, so imitative of his master that the work of the two can not be distinguished.

## (VI) Guiseppe Caponsacchi

a. Rafael and (1) Madonna

(VII) Pompilia

a. Vasari \*- (1) picture of Michael slaying the Dragon

(VIII) Dominus Hyacinthus De Archangelis

a. Cavaliere Maratti

(IX) Juris Doctor, etc.

a. Carlo Maratti

b. Luca Giordano

c. Michael Angelo

d. Rafael

e. Pietro da Cortona

f. Ciro Ferri

(X) The Pope

a. Vasari - (1) Michael slaying the Dragon

(XI) Guido

a. Albano(1578-1660) - a Bolognese who also worked at Rome,  
a painter of minute elaborationand finish, and one of  
the first to devote themselves to cabinet painting, and  
his (1) picture in Vallambrosa Convent.

b. Rafael

c. Titian

d. Monk Angelico

e. Michael Angelo

(XII) The Book and the Ring

a. Buonarroto

S. Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau

a. Rafael

b. Salvator Rosa(1615-1673) - a Neapolitan painter of battle scenes and landscapes, with a tendency toward the picturesque and romantic.

T. Pifine

a. Rafael

b. Bazzi(1477-1549) - an Italian Renaissance painter who was greatly influenced by Da Vinci, and in turn had great influence on the Sieneese school.

c. Michael Angelo

U. Red Cotton Night-Cap Country

a. Michael Angelo

b. Correggio and (1) Leda

V. Pacchiarotto group

(I) Pacchiarotto and how he Worked in Distemper

a. Pacchiarotto(b.1474 ?) - a Sieneese painter, reformer, and conspirator

b. Pacchia(b.1477) - a contemporary Sieneese painter with Pacchiarotto, also a reformer and conspirator.

c. Fungaio(1460-1516) - one of the last of the old school, whose works have rigidity and stiffness.

d. Bazzi

e. Beccafumi(1486-1551) - a Sieneese painter who weakly imitated Angelo and attempted to rival Sodoma.

f. Giotto

(II) Filippo Baldinucci

- a. Buti - a painter in Baldinucci's history of art.
- b. Titian - and (1) Leda
- c. Baldinucci(1624-1696) - a Florentine art historian  
who attempted to prove that all art was derived  
from his native city.

W. Cristina and Monaldeschi

- a. Primaticcio(1504-1570) - an Italian painter of the Bolognese  
school who did the first important stucco and fresco work in  
France.
- b. Rossi(1510-1563) - a Florentine painter who worked some in  
Rome and France.

X. Mary Wellstonecraft and Fuseli

- c. Fuseli(1741-1825) - an English painter of exaggerated style  
who attempted to be Italianate, changing his name for that  
purpose.

Y. Parleyings -

(I) With Christopher Smart

- a. Michael Angelo
- b. Rafael

(II) With Francis Furini

- a. Furini(1600-1649) - a Florentine artist and an excellent  
painter of the nude, who later became a parish priest  
and wished his undraped pictures destroyed.
- b. Michael Angelo
- c. Filippo Baldinucci
- d. Da Vinci



e. Correggio

f. Andromeda of Caravaggio

(III) With Charles Avison

a. Michael Angelo

Z. Beatrice Signorini

a. Pietro Cortona

b. Francisco Romanelli(b.1617) - painted at Rome, and was not a great artist but had a charming personality.

c. Michael Angelo

d. Guido Reni - teacher of Artemisia

e. Artemisia Gentileschi(1590± 1642) - a famous woman painter of portraits and fruits.

f. Titian

2. **TABULATION** -- Twenty-nine poems contain the names of Italian painters, and fifty-one in all are mentioned by name. Several of the great artists are mentioned in many poems. Michael Angelo is referred to in ten different poems, Rafael in seven (besides the duplicate mention in The Ring and the Book) Correggio and Titian in six poems each, and Da Vinci in five different ones. As the great masters of the High Renaissance in Italy, these are the greatest masters the world has ever known. Consequently their repeated mention is perfectly natural. But in making up the total of fifty-one painters, one finds names so unimportant that that references to them are rare in the ordinary history of art. And even with the most insignificant, some telling phrase is often used to express with admirable concision the artist's entire relation to the history of art. The best

example of this is found in Old Pictures in Florence, where he whimsically calls the roll of the past Florentine artists, chiding them because none of their work has come into his possession. In this one poem, seventeen men who have been classified as painters, are named. Only two or three of them receive more than a line or two; but each is summed up in some phrase like the following - "Da Vincis derive in good time from Dellos", "Stefano --- called Nature's Ape and the world's despair," "the wronged Lippino," or "My Pollajolo, the twice a craftsman."

3. **AMOUNT OF BROWNING'S KNOWLEDGE** -- To cover the entire field as he does, from Cimabue, through the Renaissance down to modern times & for he omits almost none of importance in the entire history of painting besides including many surprises in the way of insignificant ones) Browning had to have a wonderful amount of historical knowledge of his subject. This familiarity with the historical development of the subject was gained in three ways - (1) by some study of the subject before he went to Italy, (2) by reading histories of Italian painting before he went to that country, (3) by visiting galleries and churches in Italy and studying such pictures as he found there.

4. **DISTRIBUTION IN HIS WORKS** -- The fact that Browning had an interest in studying London galleries before he went to Italy, or from his childhood, has already been noted in the introductory remarks. Just how great his knowledge of Italian art was when he went to Italy is hard to determine. But his first poem, Pauline, contains a reference to Andromeda, a picture by Caravaggio, a Renaissance artist. Mrs. Orr, in her life of Browning, says that the picture was always before him as a boy, and that he loved

the story of the divine deliverer and the innocent victim. In one of his early letters to Elizabeth Barrett, Browning himself gives the following hint concerning his fondness for the Andromeda - "How some people use their pictures, for instance, is a mystery to me. My Polidore's perfect Andromeda along with "Boors Carousing," where I found her - my own father's doing, or I would say more." These statements prove that an interest in some Italian art, at least, had been a part of his life from a very early age; and they suggest more - that a person who had so keen an appreciation for a picture of an artist so little known as Caravaggio must have, at that time, known a great deal more about Italian art than is implied in this one statement. Browning was in his twenty-first year when Pauline, the poem referring to Andromeda, was published; and this was five years before his first visit to Italy. And at this time, his appreciation of the picture was so complete that he compared the beautiful, unchanging Andromeda to his own soul, and seemed to feel that her existence was as real as his own.

5. IRREGULARITY OF DISTRIBUTION -- While the influence of painting began so early in his poetical career and extended to its close (the last art poem being Beatrice Signorini, in the Asolande group, published just at the time of his death, the amount is by no means regular. In Paracelsus, the second poem published, none is found, Sordello(1840), has some minor references, Fippa Passes(1841), contains some mention of painters and more of sculptors. Pictor ignotus was published in 1845. All this forms a comparatively slender thread of references up to 1855. At the latter date, he had been living in Italy nine years, had studied art histories, and visited pictures. Our chronicler, Mrs. Browning again furnishes us

information (in a letter of 1847, to Horne) that they were reading Vasari. This was the next year after they had gone to Italy to live. Though Browning's early trips (in 1838 and 1844) seem to have had small effect on his ~~small~~ employment of painting, the residence there bore fruit. The publications of 1855 include Old Pictures in Florence, The Guardian Angel, Fra Lippo Lippi, Andrea del Sarto, and One Word More - the finest and best known of his poems devoted entirely to art.

6. EVENTS CONNECTED WITH OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE -- Another event recorded by Mrs. Browning in a letter to Mrs. Jameson (May 4, 1850) throws light on the first-named poem in the group of 1855. She says that her husband had picked up at a few pauls each, some "hole and corner pictures" in a corn shop a mile from Florence. Mr. Kirkup, an art connoisseur of Florence, "threw out such names for them as Cimabue, Ghirlandajo, Giotto~~no~~ a Crucifixion painted on a banner, Giottesque, if not Giotto, but unique or nearly so, on account of the linen material - and a little Virgin by a Byzantine master. Two angel pictures bought last year prove to have been sawed off the sides of the Ghirlandajo, so-called."

Besides showing, along with many other statements of their life in Italy that Browning was greatly interested in art, they suggest the title and the origin of Old Pictures in Florence. What could be more natural in its development! A poet-artist finds the pictures, is told that they are genuine, and is keenly desirous of believing it. His interest in personality turns his mind to the painters, his fancy runs with a loose rein - and we have the half-thoughtful humorous treatment of Old Pictures in Florence, in which the poet reproaches the spirits of the old masters for failing to

leave some of their work to one so appreciative as himself.

7. SOURCES OF OTHER POEMS -- The Guardian Angel was the result of visits to the chapel where Guercino's painting is found, while they were at Fano. The starting point of Andrea, as nearly every reader of the poem knows, was a request of Mr. Kenyon for a copy of Andrea's painting of himself and wife. When Browning failed to procure a copy of the picture, he wrote the poem and sent it as a record of what the picture contained.

Baldinucci's history of Italian art was also the source of some of Browning's art material, for instance, Beatrice Signorini, and probably With Francis Furini. However, his main guide on the subject, in literature, was Vasari, whose gossip narratives he followed almost exactly in Fra Lippo Lippi, and partly in Andrea del Sarto, and others.

8. NUMBER DEALING WITH PAINTING AS A MAIN SUBJECT -- Nine poems in all deal with Italian painters or painting as the primary subject matter. They are - Old Pictures in Florence, The Guardian-Angel, Pictor Ignotus, Fra Lippo Lippi, Andrea del Sarto, One Word More, A Face, Pacehiarotto, Filippo Baldinucci, and With Francis Furini. Of these seven have the work or personality of a single artist as the theme, and the three usually considered the finest are dramatic monologues. It is also true that the best of the entire list containing painting to any large degree are those published in the collection of 1855. Just why this is true is hard to prove but easy to conjecture. The time just previous to their publication marks the period of greatest art study, and here the secret probably lies. There was a certain power, an appreciation, and a fineness of feeling and expression about these first years in the great art center of Florence that never returned again. And the best that

Browning was capable of putting into verse on the subject of painters was written as soon as it came to his mind in these first years of residence in Florence.

9. USES FOR COMPARISON -- Browning's poems also have many references to painting used by way of comparison. Such is the one in Pauline, likening himself to Andromeda, the one in Sordello, comparing that poet to the same picture, the conjecture in Waring, that he may be painting as much as Polidore Caravaggio, and the use of writing versus painting in One Word More. Some ten or twelve comparative uses are found in The Ring and the Book, also; but space does not permit their detailed mention here.

10. FIDELITY TO HISTORY -- A few instances of departure from the facts of history are found in the poems of this section; but where such is the case it usually results from an error in the authorities Browning followed, even though they were the best in their day. Some very recent investigators state that Browning unduly exaggerated the character of the wife in Andrea del Sarto. However, no less an authority than W. M. Rossetti (in the Encyclopaedia Britannica) says that he was essentially true to the facts in representing her. Others insist that he was somewhat unfair in the general impression of Andrea; but if so, it is well, from a poetic and dramatic standpoint that he did so. In Fra Lippe Lippi, there are several small errors. For example, Guidi (Masaccio) is now known to have been the master, not the pupil of Lippi; and the picture in St. Ambrogio, made Lippe known to Cosimo Medici instead of being the expiation of a prank after that acquaintance had been made.



14. THEMES OF ART POEMS -- Of Browning's poems dealing primarily with painting, the majority are too well known to require extended explanation here. Pictor Ignotus, the talented youth who refused to exercise his gift because of his sensitiveness to ignorant criticism, Andrea del Sarto of the faultless technique, but without deep inspiration and ideality of feeling, and Fra Lippo Lippi, the coarse realism of whose nature mingled with a really fine appreciation for God's works - all these are familiar. In Pacchiarotto, one not so well known, he tells the story of the reformer and painter who suffered at the hands of the people opposing his doctrine. With a decidedly humorous treatment, rollicking verse and impossible rhymes, he carries on the poem and concludes with a fling at his critics of verse. Filippo Baldinucci retells a rather amusing story of that author, with an added conclusion of Browning's own.

With Francis Furini is the best, the most serious, and most poetical of the latter poems on painting. It contains a somewhat extended defense of the nude in art, the substance of which is suggested by the following quotation:-

"No gift but in the very plentitude  
Of its perfection, goes maimed, misconstrued  
By wickedness or weakness: still some few  
Have grace to see thy purpose, strength to mar  
Thy work with no admixture of their own."

----- Show beauty's May, ere June  
Undo the bud's blush, leave a rose to cull  
- No poppy neither! Yet less perfect-pure  
Divinely-precious with life's dew besprent.



Show saintliness that's simply innocent  
Of guessing sinnership exists."

These last few paragraphs suggest only the main subject matter of the art poems; but just as in the other sections, the treatment here can not be taken up in detail. More has been done seemingly, in analyzing the art in a few poems than in giving a general survey of the whole field; and what has been done in the latter way can be seen by a glance at the Browning Society Papers.

\*\*\*\*\*

## C O N C L U S I O N

## I. BROWNING'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ART

1. LIPPO'S VIEW AS EXPRESSING HIS OWN -- No summary of Italian art can pretend to include a complete view of the way in which Browning looked at art. But the poet has given us many personalities in the field of art - none of them, perhaps, like his own. But the Italian artist whose views most nearly accord with his own is the monk, Lippo Lippi, with his admiration of the beauty in the world, and his plea for presenting it as God made it. ---

----- "You've seen the world

\* The beauty and the wonder and the power,  
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,  
Changes, surprises, and God made it all!"

-----

"But why not do as well as say, - paint these  
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?  
God's works - paint anyone and count it crime  
To let a truth slip."

Lippo's theory, and with it Browning's, is no plea of art for art's sake, and no dull level of didacticism. It gives us art for life's sake, with a reverent optimism toward humanity and its laws.

2. USE OF SECOND-RATE ARTISTS -- This theory of art is in accord with the one word, personality, that is written large in all of Browning's work. While he mentions the great masters of art many times, it is noticeable that he never uses one of them as the main subject of a

poem. There are Andreas, Lippos, and Furinis, but no Angelo or Rafael. He was interested in the subject he chose, not because he was an artist alone, not because he was great, but because he wished his readers to study with him, the peculiar viewpoint of the Man. Often the characters he chose to treat thus were such as we do not approve of wholly; but neither did he. He took them as they were-- God's creatures with their mixture of good and evil - "paint anyone, and count it crime to let a truth slip."

3. COMPARATIVE AMOUNT OF PERSONALITY IN THE ARTS -- In treating the five divisions of Italian art in Browning - sculpture, music, poetry, architecture, and painting, the order has been determined largely by amount. No extended comparison of the different ones in regard to quantity, then, is needed here. However, a few generalizations concerning the reason for the variation in treatment, seem not amiss.

Architecture and sculpture are the arts of concrete bodily form, without so much expression of the soul or spirit; while painting, music, and poetry, attempt to group and fix the spirit that animates bodily forms. It has already been pointed out that Browning employed sculpture the least of all the arts; and that while he names very works of architecture in his poems, it is only in one instance that he pays tribute to it and treats it as a art. To generalize, Browning's great subject is the human soul. Consequently the small amount of consideration given to architecture and sculpture as arts, is their lack of personal, distinguishing soul-quality. He never has treated an architect, as such, in any extended way. There was no personality in

a building for him to portray in a dramatic situation.

His view of sculpture versus painting is expressed in Old Pictures in Florence . Even when the sculpture was the perfect product of Greece he preferred the power of growth and development possessed by Italian painting in its crude beginnings.

Another reason for the predominance of painting over sculpture, as Browning has treated it, consists in the fact that Italy, where so many years of his life were spent is the natural mother of painting. The scenes where its former art masters once lived, their works, their entire environment were all about him. Had he lived in so complete an atmosphere of sculpture, even, it would probably have become a much more prominent feature of his writing. For as it is, he not only mentions very little Italian sculpture, but he does not even refer to the Greek artists and their work, except in a very general way.

The cause for the large amount of treatment of Italian poets in Browning's early writings has already been touched upon. When he was feeling his way as a writer and blazing the trails he was to follow as a poet, he had a desire to express his ideas of that art. But with his ideas and forms once established, the art became self-expressive. He no longer needed to write about a poet; for the poet himself was writing.

The common ground of all the arts is expression of some emotion pertaining to one's own personality; but few people have as great an interest in expressing themselves in all the arts as did Robert Browning. Architecture and sculpture he appreciated least; therefore he expressed least concerning the spirit and feeling of them. Music was a fundamental part

of his life; but he was able to embody his feelings in music itself, not in poetry about it. But because of his perfect understanding of it, he embodied its spirit in a few choice poems; and in its his treatment of its evanescent quality, made permanent the ideas he could not leave to the world by playing. Painting he appreciated from childhood; but beyond a few amateur efforts by way of a diversion from writing, he could not express his appreciation by means of that art itself. Consequently, in many of his poems he has given either his views of painting, or his portraits of its artists.

4. BROWNING -- Browning's art, then, is that embodying personality; and indeed, his theory of art for life's sake resolves itself so thoroughly into art for the sake of humanity and the soul, that he is never the poet of inanimate nature. Even its beauties have small attraction for him unless seen through the glass of personality; and when he was asked if he liked nature, he replied - "Yes, but I like men and women better." Any art, then, he loved, when it became the expression of truth concerning men and women, and he wished to make it his art, at least by its embodiment in his poems.



University of Kansas Libraries



3 3838 100531104